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## Book Reviews and Journal Notes

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VOIGT, MELVIN J., *Advances in Librarianship*, v. 1. N. Y., Academic Press, 1970. 294 p. \$15.00.

Medical librarians have been familiar with "Advances" series for many generations, probably ever since 1866 when Virchow took over Canstatt's *Jahresbericht über die Fortschritte der gesamten Medicine* . . . (published 1841–1865) and made it a vital force in keeping practicing physicians and research workers abreast of the explosion of biomedical knowledge occurring in the second half of the nineteenth century. The shift of the center of gravity of scientific research from Germany to English-speaking worlds after World War II has tended to result in the establishment of new series of this type in the English language. Now librarians have become part of the trend, first with the British *Year's Work in Librarianship*, then with the American *Annual Review of Information Science*, and now with the *Advances in Librarianship*.

The characteristics of this type of literature are that each volume discusses the burning issues of its time, so that each one may include different topics from the preceding or succeeding volume; that the topics included are discussed by authorities in the field; that a review of the literature is a *sine qua non*; and that gaps in the field are pointed out, together with suggestions for further work.

All of these things are in the volume under review. The standing of the editor, Melvin J. Voigt, and his associates, such as Ralph Blasingame, Robert H. Muller, Ruth M. Tews, Helen Welch Tuttle and Carl M. White, give reflected stature to the chapters. While not meant particularly for medical librarians, the chapters on automation and on bibliotherapy are particularly pertinent to those working in medical installations, while such subjects as "Standards for Technical Cost Studies," or "Library Planning: The Challenge of Change" are as burning an issue to medical libraries as to public, university, or children's libraries. Moreover, the insights which Carl White brings to his discussion of international librarianship make this section required reading for all librarians.

It is to be expected, of course, that not all chapters will be equally well written: the art of simple, effective exposition appears to be one of the things one gets from God and a good genetic background, rather than through study courses. Nevertheless, when the information is as important as that in the Library Planning chapter, it is vital that librarians wade through the turgid prose to obtain the information set forth in it. And luckily most of the authors of chapters write clearly and well.

An interesting sidelight on the speed with which librarianship is changing these days is to be found in the first few chapters, which discuss automation in libraries. Since the volume was published in January 1970, the text must have been compiled in late 1968 or very early 1969. Reading the sections on automation from these dates makes one who is actively engaged in the area feel that he is reading history—so fast has this dynamic subject moved in a short time. The Preface suggests that the series is intended "to provide a permanently useful reference volume which will document the progress of librarianship as it changes its methods and scope and perhaps even its objectives." This the chapters on automation will undoubtedly do even better than the *Annual Review of Information Science*, because the *Advances* will give the stance of the library profession as a whole to automation, while the *Annual Review* will discuss the far-out, cutting edge of knowledge of machines as means for structuring libraries and serving their users better. Thus, each series has its advantages and uses. But the speed with which librarianship changes these days raises the question whether the delay in the publication of the *Handbook of Medical Library Practice* will not result in the issuance of a volume as useless as the very delayed report of the President's National Advisory Commission on Libraries.

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GOLDHOR, HERBERT. *An Introduction to Scientific Research in Librarianship*. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Wel-